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THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND ITS APPLICATION TO
PEOPLES UNDER COLONIAL OR ALIEN DOMINATION OR FOREIGN OCCUPATION

Written statement submitted by the International Organization for
the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (IAFORD),
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement,
which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council
resolution 1996/31.

[20 January 1999]

1. In regard to the right of peoples to self-determination and the right to return to one's own country, we often ask ourselves the same question raised by many Jews who listen to reason and abide by human standards of fairness and justice. How can anyone logically and historically accept as law the Law of Return in Israel which permits any Jew, from anywhere in the world, to migrate to Palestine and enjoy residency and citizenship rights in Israel, whereas, this discriminatory law prohibits any Palestinian, whether Christian or Muslim, from returning to the homeland where they were born, where their parents and great-grandparents, for thousands of years?

2. How can logic and history accept a country without borders since neither its Constitution nor its laws determine where its borders begin and end, and where a defining point of its territory meets land belonging to others? There is no doubt that such an unusual and unacceptable situation conveys a dangerous and deviant meaning.

3. Israel, as everyone knows, was established as a result of a resolution adopted by the United Nations which was called at the time the "Partition Resolution". But Israel does not recognize the legally binding conditions of the very same resolution that brought it into existence in the first place! Furthermore, Israel does not recognize hundreds of other resolutions adopted by the United Nations. Unfortunately, fanatic Israeli leaders think that through their influence and organized manipulation of the media, they can continue to sabotage and ignore matters supported by documented facts and history.

4. As the distinguished British historian Arnold Toynbee noted, the Israeli State is a foreign body planted through force, violence and conspiracy in an ancient area that has its own history and triumphs, the Middle East. He further commented that natural forces determine that a foreign body either adapts itself to the new environment, or it will find itself being discarded and rejected.

5. There is no doubt that many of the highly intellectual and rational Jews realize this solid truth. Therefore, they exert tenacious efforts to get along with their neighbours and to uphold the banner of peace, and peace here and now. However, some fanatic Jews who aspire for a Greater Israel from the river to the river, as reflected in their Parliament's motto, seem to stumble as they dwell in ideologies of ethnic and racial superiority which do not foster national and international harmony and tranquillity. This fanatic trend made Israel more than once take an extreme position, as the whole world community stood on the opposite side. This indisputable reality is evident in several resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations. In the short or long run, that trend will lead to the fulfilment of Toynbee's theory, because the biased support of the United States of America for Israel will not last forever. The people of the United States of America will reject this biased position, which is currently supported by the media and politicians, and will re-examine their real interests in the area. When this awareness is realized and as the people of the United States of America awaken from the media and political propaganda, sooner more likely than later, Israel will lose the long-standing and strongest source of support, on which it has relied all of these years.

6. Another important point is that no matter how powerful and resourceful Israel can be, it cannot simply swallow up and fully absorb this ancient area.

The end of the twentieth century is unlike the nineteenth century because colonization based on military force and superiority ended without the possibility of resurrection.

7. Our words reflect tens of studies founded on and supported by researched facts and examined laws presented by the members of our organization. The members of our organization specialize in different fields and come from different ethnic, national and religious backgrounds. Some of them are Jews, Christians, Muslims; among them are leftists and rightists. But all strongly condemn Israel's illegal actions and flagrant violations committed in the Middle East; confiscating Palestinian lands, building settlements, demolishing homes, uprooting trees, detaining prisoners without due process, restricting movement, etc. And one of the most flagrant violations and discriminatory factors of all is the Law of Return for Jews and not Palestinians.

8. What some of Israel's leaders sought and still seek through reaching separate agreements with one party or another in the area is a pretentious and superficial peace-seeking process that has proved damaging and harmful to all parties concerned. The negative consequences of such faint attempts are witnessed in Egypt, Jordan, and in Palestine itself. History has taught us that the pretence of peace is worse than no peace. This sham will certainly lead, in the short or long run, to a devastating war which will, eventually, not favour the Jews' own interests and welfare.

9. We conclude with a great lesson from the leader of the leaders of history who once said to his follows, "Stand by your brother, whether he is the oppressed or the oppressor". His followers replied, "We stand by him when oppressed, that is his right which we will respect and provide, but why and how can we stand by him when he is the oppressor?" He answered, "You do so through standing by him against his oppression, forbidding him from proceeding further into it".

10. Will the human rights community, Member States, intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organizations be able to make a stand to save Israel from itself and to prevent Israel's fanatics from committing further atrocities and brutality in the Middle East? The more rational Jewish activists in Palestine are in much need of our support and solidarity.

11. On television a young Israeli peace activist was crying the day Benjamin Netanyahu won the election. The tears of that young peace activist will stay in the memory of several people and viewers. Will we ever wipe 50 years of tears off the face of Palestine? That young Israeli peace activist represents 50 per cent of the Jewish population in Palestine. The international community can make it 80 per cent or more by standing together and working jointly against the wild ambition of the fanatic Jews and their followers.

12. We should not deceive ourselves or bury our heads in the sand, ignoring the glaring fact which confirms that there is no solution to this tragedy other than the establishment of a democratic non-sectarian State in which Jews, Christians and Muslims will cooperate and which will be the foundation of peace in the world.